GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:250
ANSWERED ON:27.02.2008
BACKWARD REGION GRANT FUND
Mandal Shri Sanat Kumar

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) the salient features of BRGF scheme;

(b) the details of the works which are taken up in various districts under this scheme and regulatory mechanism thereof;

(c) the role of Panchayats in this regard;

(d) the manner in which Government proposes to provide training to representatives of Panchayats for proper implementation of the scheme; and

(e) the amount sanctioned under this scheme to Gram Panchayats in Himachal Pradesh?

Answer

MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ(SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR)

(a): The Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) programme covers 250 districts across 27 States. The programme is designed to redress regional imbalances in development. The programme provides for release of funds under three components namely

(i) releases to those districts that have not received their total entitlement under Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana (RSVY);

(ii) funds for capacity building of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and

(iii) untied development grant.

The State Government decides the allocation among the rural and urban local bodies and to each level of these bodies on the basis of the index or formula accepted within the State to determine backwardness or level of development. Funds from BRGF can be used to stitch together multiple programmes and to fill any gaps in the on going development programmes in the district. There is a provision for separate sub plans showing scheme wise allocation for Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes.Special provisions have been made under the programme for release of funds to districts that do not fall under Part IX and IX A of the Constitution.

(b): The works/ projects taken up in various districts depend on the felt needs and their prioritisation by the Panchayats in rural areas and urban local bodies (ULB) in urban areas and the District Planning Committees. An illustrative list of works taken up under BRGF includes construction of anganwadi centres, kitchen sheds for cooking midday meals in schools, sub health centres, veterinary dispensaries, playgrounds, hostels for students, additional class rooms, panchayat bhawans, community halls and intra village roads. Funds are also seen to be assigned for drainage, electrification, drinking water supply, vocational training, etc. Details of the works taken up in the plans of various districts are available at Ministry's website www.brgf.gov.in

(c): Panchayats in rural areas and municipalities in urban areas are the designated authorities for planning and implementation of the programme. Planning Commission's guidelines of 25th August 2006 for the preparation of district plans in the 11th Five Year Plan period, have been adopted under the programme. The guidelines provide for plans to be prepared in each Panchayat and municipality in a participatory manner taking into account resources from other programmes being spent in their respective areas and utilising the funds allocated under BRGF for filling critical gaps.The plans prepared by the Panchayats and the Municipalities in the district are consolidated into the district plan by the District Planning Committees.

(d): The programme guidelines include a detailed capacity building framework for the elected representatives and staff of the Panchayati Raj Institutions with suggested modules for training.These include foundation courses with an overview of Panchayati Raj, functional courses on internal housekeeping, accounts, social audit, functional literacy course and training in implementation of schemes in various sectors, such as elementary education, public health, poverty alleviation, roads, rural electrification etc. Each of the State Governments has nominated an agency, which is the State Institute of Rural Development in most cases, to conduct the training for Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). The State Governments prepare plans for capacity building including the training schedule for 5-years on the basis of which, the capacity building grant for each year is released.

(e): 2 districts of Himachal Pradesh namely, Chamba and Sirmour are included in the programme.The respective allocations of Chamba and Sirmour are Rs. 15.53 crore and Rs. 12.97 crore. Himachal Pradesh has not yet claimed any amount from the allocation

for the development grant.